USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Dixie National Forest Escalante Ranger District | 755 West Main Escalante, UT 84726-0246 435-826-5400

**Allotment Management Plan**

**for the**

# Sweetwater-Griffin Top Allotment

**Escalante Ranger District – Dixie National Forest – Region 4**

**Management Plan Prepared by:** _____ **Date:** 06/18/2010
Rangeland Management Specialist

**Reviewed By:** _____ **Date:** 7-6-10
Permittee

**Approved by:** _____ **Date:** 08/09/10
District Ranger

**This Allotment Management Plan is hereby made a part of your Term Grazing Permit and is incorporated in Part 3 of that permit.**

**Sweetwater-Griffin Top Allotment Management Plan**
**Escalante Ranger District**
**Dixie National Forest**

# I. Introduction

## A. Authority

The Federal Land Policy Management Act (FLPMA), as amended by the Public Rangelands Improvement Act (PRIA) allows for Allotment Management Plans (AMP's) to be included in grazing permits at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture (43 U.S.C. 1752(d), as amended by 92 Stat. 1803 (1978)). The Secretary has elected to exercise this discretion, and has delegated his authority to issue regulations in this area to the Chief of the Forest Service (36 CFR 222.1 et.seq.).

## B. Definition

An Allotment Management Plan is defined in FLPMA as a document prepared in consultation with lessees or permittees applying to livestock operations on the public lands prescribing: 1) the manner in and extent to which livestock operations will be conducted in order to meet multiple use, sustained-yield economic and other needs and objectives, 2) range improvements to be installed and maintained, such other provisions relating to livestock grazing and other objectives found by the Secretary to be consistent with the provisions of the FLPMA (43 USC 1702(k), 36 CFR 222.1 (b) (2), and FSM 1023).

## C. History

The land comprising the Sweetwater-Griffin Top Allotment has been grazed by domestic livestock since 1870. The Griffin Top area was used mostly by sheep until 1958 when it was converted to cattle. The Sweetwater area was used by both cattle and sheep, in common, until 1955 when it was made exclusive cattle range. Since the Sweetwater area is near the old town of Widtsoe, heavy livestock grazing occurred on the area when that town was being settled. This resulted in range depletion and development of several gullies through the allotment. The Griffin Top area has several natural passes that allow livestock passage to it from adjacent allotments. This has resulted in considerable drift from the surrounding allotments. Attempts were made to control this drift in the 1930's by fencing the passes. This proved partially successful. Numerous adjustments in livestock numbers, seasons of use and allotment boundaries occurred from 1940-1970 on both portions of the allotment. The last major change was made in 1971 when the allotment and several adjacent allotment boundaries were changed on the district so management could be achieved. At that time the permittee wanted to graze 200 head of cattle on the allotment for his permitted Animal Unit Months. This resulted in a 6/6 – 9/30 grazing season being set for the allotment. Since that time the permit has remained in the same family and the numbers and season of use have remained the same.

### D. Current Management

The Sweetwater-Griffin Top Allotment consists of three pastures: Sweetwater, South Creek and Griffin Top. The allotment is managed using a three pasture deferred rotation grazing system. All pastures are used each year. One permittee is authorized to graze 200 cow/calf pairs during a season of 6/6 through 9/30. The allotment consists of approximately 21,195 acres of National Forest System lands, of which approximately 7,410 acres (35%) are suitable.

## II. Goals & Objectives, Desired Resource Condition, Standards & Guidelines

### A. Goals and Objectives (Desired Condition)

1. Achieve or maintain satisfactory range conditions on all rangelands (Dixie NF LRMP IV-37). Satisfactory range condition on a site is defined as meeting or moving toward desired condition. A downward vegetation and/or soil trend (site is moving away from desired condition) would also cause further evaluation and/or change in management direction (Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

**Desired Condition**

Uplands

- Maintain minimum ground cover on uplands as specified in the current Dixie National Forest Supplement to FSH 2209.21 – Rangeland Ecosystem Analysis and Management Handbook Chapter 20 – Rangeland Inventory and Analysis. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of ground cover and soil stability -Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6)

- Maintain the relative frequency of invasive plants at less than 10 percent on uplands not affected by fire or already infested by invasive plants. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of plant composition and vigor - Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

- Maintain a plant composition overall resource value rating of greater than "low" on all uplands not affected by fire or already infested by invasive plants. (Range Vegetation Condition and Trend - measurement of plant composition and vigor - Monitoring and Evaluation Program, Dixie NF LRMP V-6).

Riparian Areas

- All riparian areas are moving toward or are being maintained in at least an upper mid-seral successional stage. (≥60% of potential)

- Maintain 50 percent or more of total streambank length in stable condition (Dixie NF LRMP IV-33). This will be interpreted as maintaining 50 percent of all riparian areas with at least a moderate bank stability rating

Management Tools Used to Accomplish Desired Condition

- Range utilization standards: Provide a stocking level and system of range management that will not exceed the LRMP Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria. (see ppg. 5-6 below)

- Riparian management: Provide a stocking level, system of management, season of use, and necessary improvements that will protect riparian areas. (see ppg. 5-6 below for Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria)

2. Protection of threatened, endangered and sensitive plant and animal species: Provide a season of use and utilization level that will protect population of sensitive plants and animals. Protection of plants must allow for sufficient seed production to maintain or improve current populations.

3. Control or eradicate Class A and Class B (Utah Noxious Weed Act) noxious weed infestations as they occur on the allotment using the concepts of Integrated Pest Management.

## B. Summary of Existing Resource Conditions

Utilization criteria of 50% on uplands and 60% on crested wheatgrass are consistently applied and rarely exceeded (average 39% use across the allotment since 1992). The reseeded areas are in good condition and appear to be functioning well. Interspaces inherent with crested wheatgrass allows significant recording of bare ground of over 50%. This appears to be normal for these sites and crested wheatgrass has an excellent grazing tolerance and has an excellent rating for stabilizing severely disturbed watersheds. Dr. Charles Kay's repeat photography indicates that on Griffin Top ground cover appears to have increased and that the range appears to be in good condition with the trend up or at least stable. Additionally since 2005, 5 upland trend studies have been established. These studies show average ground cover at 50% with two of the sites below the most recent recommended desired condition for ground cover. Average relative frequency of invasive plants is at 3.3%, with one site slightly over the recommended <10%. And the plant composition overall resource value rating is Medium. While no riparian areas were delineated in the range analysis there has been a green line study set up on South Creek which shows this marginal riparian area to be in a mid-seral status. Incidental populations of whitetop occur along the Sweetwater Canyon road at the forest boundary. They are treated annually for eradication.

## C. Land and Resource Management Plan Standards and Guidelines

The Dixie National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) approved in 1986 outlines the Standards and Guidelines that will be achieved through future management activities on the Dixie National Forest. The following Standards and Guidelines will be implemented through this Allotment Management Plan:

### ➢ Range

1. Provide forage to sustain local dependent livestock industry. (IV-36)
2. Remove livestock from allotments for the remainder of the grazing season when proper use is reached. (IV-36)
3. On rangeland in less than satisfactory condition, remove livestock when recovery of range condition cannot be accomplished by the grazing system.(IV-112)
4. Invest in cost effective grazing management and associated range improvements.
5. Invest in cost effective grazing management and rangeland productivity improvement, where improvements include water developments, and where water right is in the name of the United States. (IV-112)
    - **A.** Structural improvement will not adversely affect big game movement. Reference FSM 2541.23.
6. Control noxious farm weeds in the following priority:
    - **A.** Musk thistles, Scotch thistle, Canada thistle.
    - **B.** Invasion of new plant species classified as noxious farm weeds;
    - **C.** Infestation in new areas;
    - **D.** Expansion of existing infestations of Scotch, Musk and Canada thistle, and other noxious farm weeds; and
    - **E.** Reduce acreage of current infestation. (IV-37)

### ➢ Range Improvements

1. Structural range improvements should be developed to benefit both wildlife and livestock.
    - **A.** Structural improvements and maintenance will be in accordance with FSM 2209.22 (R-4) and 2609.11. (IV-37)
2. To facilitate the control of soil erosion within acceptance tolerance, soil survey or site specific soils data will be used to develop revegetation projects.(IV-37)

### ➢ Recreation

1. Manage livestock grazing to enhance recreation opportunities in existing and proposed recreation sites.
    - **A.** Construct fences of material other than barbed mire around developed sites. (IV-59,61)
2. Exclude grazing of recreational stock and livestock in developed recreation sites.
    - **A.** Maintain vegetation in fair or better range condition.(IV,59)
3. Manage livestock distribution and stocking rates to be compatible with recreation use. Locate Structural improvements to meet Visual Quality Objectives. (IV-65)

## III. Management Actions

A. Management System

### 1. Livestock Grazing System

The Sweetwater-Griffin Top Allotment is managed using a three pasture modified deferred rotation grazing system. All pastures are used each year. Cattle are placed first in either the South Creek or Sweetwater units, on alternating years. They graze this area for approximately one month. Cattle are then gathered and moved to the Griffin Top pasture. The cattle stay on Griffin Top until around September 6 when they are moved back to either the South Creek or Sweetwater unit, whichever was not grazed early in the season. Herding will be required to keep cattle from drifting between the Sweetwater and South Creek pastures during their scheduled period of use. The rotation is as follows:

| YEAR | 1st | 2nd | 3rd |
|---|---|---|---|
| **One** | Sweetwater | Griffin Top | South Creek |
| **Two** | South Creek | Griffin Top | Sweetwater |

Actual entry and exit dates will depend on factors such as forage development, soil conditions, proper use determinations and joint monitoring. Permittees would be notified and cattle removed from the National Forest when the Forest Officer judges the allotment to be at proper use.

## 2. Utilization Standard Criteria

| Dixie NF - Maximum Allowable Forage Use Criteria | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **UTILIZATION BY SERAL STAGE** | | | | | |
| Vegetation Type | Very Early | Early | Mid | Late | Comments * SH = Stubble Height |
| Riparian Hydric Species | 6" SH | 6" SH | 4" SH | 4" SH | Remaining at end of growing season |
| Riparian Emphasis Management Areas | 6" SH | 6" SH | | | Remaining at end of growing season |
| Hydric Species in wet meadows not influenced by streams | 6" SH | 6" SH | 4" SH | 4" SH | Remaining at end of growing season |
| Non-hydric Species in Riparian Areas | 2" SH | 2" SH | 2" SH | 2" SH | Remaining at end of growing season |
| Upland Species | 50% | 50% | 50% | 50% | Varying in specific unit from 40-60% |
| Wheatgrass Seedings | 60% | 60% | 60% | 60% | Management option to exceed 60% use to maintain healthy seedings |
| Riparian Browse | <50% | | | | New Leader Production |
| Streambanks | <20% disturbance | | | | Sloughing, trampling, dislodged stones, animal tracks |
| Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs) | Pond Pine/ Mixed Species | Grass/Forb | Avg 20% NTE 40% | | Applies in up to 2-acre openings in 600-acre areas |
| Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs) | Pond Pine/ Mixed Species | Shrub | Avg 40% NTE 50% | | Applies in up to 2-acre openings in 600-acre areas |
| Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs) | Spruce-Fir | Grass/Forb | Avg 20% NTE 40% | | Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 600-acre areas |
| Goshawk Post-Fledgling Family Areas (PFAs) | Spruce-Fir | Shrub | Avg 40% NTE 50% | | Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 600-acre areas |
| | | | | | |
| Goshawk Foraging Areas | Pond Pine/ Mixed Species | Grass/Forb | Avg 20% NTE 40% | | Applies in up to 4-acre openings in 6000-acre areas |
| Goshawk Foraging Areas | Pond Pine/ Mixed Species | Shrub | Avg 40% NTE 50% | | Applies in up to 4-acre openings in 6000-acre areas |
| Goshawk Foraging Areas | Spruce-Fir | Grass/Forb | Avg 20% NTE 40% | | Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 6000-acre areas |
| Goshawk Foraging Areas | Spruce-Fir | Shrub | Avg 40% NTE 50% | | Applies in up to 1-acre openings in 6000-acre areas |

B. Livestock Management

1. No livestock will be allowed on Forest lands until range readiness as determined by the Forest Service has been reached.
2. All improvements (range facilities) on the allotment will be maintained by the assigned permittee (as provided for in Part 2, 8i of the Term Grazing Permit) to a condition adequate to perpetuate the life of the facility and to serve the purpose intended.
3. Permittee is required to provide a rider/herder to achieve proper distribution and management of the livestock.
4. Utilization will be followed as prescribed. When the prescribed use level is reached livestock will be moved to the next unit or off the allotment.
5. Numbers and season of use will be adjusted annually if determined necessary by the District Ranger.
6. Distribution is critical as utilization is approached you will be required to move to the next unit. Therefore, it is vital that the herd be moved daily out of areas of high consentration to areas typicaly ignored. Do not allow livestock to concentrate at historically used areas. Strays will not be allowed to stay in previously grazed units and will be moved promptly.
7. Salt will be located at least 1/4 mile from water troughs, springs, ponds, lakes, wet meadows and riparian areas. Salt will be moved from areas where feed has been used to standards. (IV-37)
8. All improvements will be constructed by cost-sharing between the permittees and the Forest Service unless otherwise specified. Maximum share of improvements by the government will be 50%.
9. Fences will be designed and located to consider wildlife and visual impacts.
10. All stock water troughs will have small animal escape features installed.
11. Permittees will be required to notify the Forest Service when animals enter the Forest and when they leave at the end of the season.
12. Existing fences will be extended or modified where needed in order to provide a complete barrier to livestock movement.
13. Cultural resource survey and clearance will be required prior to construction of ground disturbing range improvements.
14. Carcasses of dead livestock on National Forest lands will be removed by the owner for a distance of at least three-hundred (300) feet from any live water and one-hundred (100) feet from any trailhead or recreation trail. Carcasses will be removed for a distance of at least five-hundred (500) feet from any campground or picnic area.
15. Prohibit trailing of livestock along the length of riparian areas. Relocate stock driveways where found in riparian areas. Rehabilitate damaged riparian areas to achieve riparian-area goals.

C. Noxious Weed Prevention Practices

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**
**FOREST SERVICE**
**INTERMOUNTAIN REGION**
**ALL NATIONAL FORESTS**

**Weed Free Hay Order**

**PROHIBITIONS:**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b), and 36 CFR 261.58(t), a Regional Forester may prohibit possessing, storing, or transporting any part of a tree or other plant, as specified in the Order. By this Order, the following acts are prohibited on the area, roads, and trails as described in this order, all within National Forest System Lands within the Intermountain Region until further notice:

**1. Possessing, storing, or transporting, non-pelletized hay, straw or mulch on National Forest System Lands without having each individual bale or container tagged or marked as weed free, or having original and current evidence of weed free certification documentation present. All markings must meet the State and/or County standards for certification as weed free.**

**EXEMPTIONS:**

Pursuant to 36 CFR 261.50 (e) the following persons are exempt from this order:

1. Persons with a permit specifically authorizing them from the effect of this Order.
2. Any member of an organized rescue force in the performance of an official duty.

**AREA DESCRIBED:**

**All National Forest System Lands within the boundaries of the Intermountain Region that include the Ashley, Boise, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Dixie, Fishlake, Humboldt-Toiyabe, Manti-Lasal, Payette, Salmon-Challis, Sawtooth, Uinta and Wasatch-Cache National Forests.**

**PURPOSE:**

The above prohibition is necessary to prevent the spread of noxious weeds into a vulnerable ecosystem on National Forest System lands.

**IMPLEMENTATION:**

1. This Order will be in effect when signed and shall remain in effect until further notice.
2. Any violation of this prohibition is punishable by a fine of not more than $5,000 for an individual or $10,000, for an organization, and/or imprisonment for not more than six (6) months. [Title 16 USC 551, Title 18 USC 3571(b)(6), Title 18 USC 3581 (b)(7)].
3. This Order supersedes any previous orders prohibiting the same, or similar, acts in the above described areas.

Done at Ogden, Utah this 11th day of February 2003.

JACK G. TROYER

JACK G. TROYER
Regional Forester
Intermountain Region

Order Number: 04-00-097

## D. Rangeland (structural & non-structural) Improvement Program

The SGT allotment does not currently require new structural range improvements (fences or water developments) to properly manage, distribute, and/or control livestock. However, provision is included for maintenance of both existing structural and non-structural range improvements. Vegetation type-conversions (sagebrush and pinyon-juniper to grass/forb types) are subject to periodic maintenance. New vegetation treatment projects (non-structural improvements), on previously un-treated sites, may be required to maintain proper functioning condition and management of vegetation ecosystems. These projects should be conducted through appropriate NEPA planning and analyses on a site-specific basis.

## IV. Monitoring and Evaluation

A) Effectiveness Monitoring

| Objective | Item to monitor | Methods/Parameters | Frequency/Duration* | Reporting Procedures | Responsibility |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Measure condition and trend of vegetation on key areas** (effectiveness) | Monitor vegetation diversity including density, vigor, and distribution of plants. | Nested frequency transect or equivalent established in key areas | 5-10 year interval | Summary of transect data, brief evaluation of trend and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files | Forest Botanist or District Rangeland Management Specialist |
| Measure utilization levels at key areas on all units. *** (implementation) | Total forage utilization | Paired plot method and Ocular estimate by plot, key forage plant method | Annually | Summary of transect data, narrative summary of findings and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files | District Rangeland Management Specialist |
| Determine watershed conditions on key areas on the allotment (validation) | 1.) Monitor vegetation diversity including density, vigor, and distribution of plants, and 2.) effective ground cover and soil stability. | Nested frequency transects or equivalent established on key areas. | 5-10 year interval | Summary of transect data, brief evaluation of trend and photographic record. File is located in 2210 files | Forest Botanist or District Rangeland Management Specialist |

*Frequency/Duration of monitoring items may vary dependent upon need, budget constraints, etc. that have come up or will come up since completion of the 10/27/2006 CE.

** 1. Maintain re-read and re-photograph the following ground cover, photo points, 3' X 3' photo plots and/or nested frequency studies at least every 5-10years.

a) 6121 South Creek
b) 5036 Sweetwater Creek
c) 5074 Mud Lake
d) 8123 Griffin Point
e) 9066 Bug Lake

2. Re-read the following Greenline or Photo points every 5-10 years.

a) 8091 South Creek Greenline

***Short-Term Monitoring Key Areas

| Key Area | Pasture | Location |
|---|---|---|
| South Creek | South Creek | N37 48.581 W111 56.937 |
| Sweetwater | Sweetwater | N37 49.546 W111 57.433 |
| Mud Lake | Griffin Top | N37 52.634 W111 52.194 |
| Griffin Spring | Griffin Top | N37 54.248 W111 52.404 |
| Griffin North | Griffin Top | N37 57.098 W111 52.525 |
| Bug Lake | Griffin Top | N37 56.130 W111 52.535 |

B) Annual Operating Instructions

The Forest Officer will develop Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) each year. The AOI will be based on this Allotment Management Plan. The AOI will detail the current season's management schedule, rangeland development program, and use of key areas. These instructions will implement adaptive management in response to the results of the long-term studies. The AOI will become a part of the permit.

## IIV. Improvements

See part three of the term grazing permit for an up to date list of the current range improvements and maintenance responsibilities.

## IIIV. Graphics and Appendices

Allotment Boundary/Range Improvement Map